

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims 109, 115, 126 and 127 as follows.

1- 88. Cancelled.

89. (Withdrawn) A method of controlling closing times in an electronic auction, comprising:
setting a first closing time for a first lot and second closing time for a second lot;
extending said first closing;
determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing
time; and
extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.

90. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 89, wherein said extending said first closing time
comprises:
determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time; and
adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.

91. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 89, further comprising:
setting a third closing time for a third lot;
determining whether to extend said third closing time based on said extended second closing
time; and
extending said third closing time in accordance with said determination.

92. (Withdrawn) A machine-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to
control closing times in an electronic auction, comprising;
setting a first closing time for a first lot and second closing time for a second lot;

extending said first closing time;
determining whether to extend said second closing time based on said extended first closing time; and
extending said second closing time in accordance with said determination.

93. (Withdrawn) The machine-readable medium of claim 92, wherein said extending said first closing time comprises:

determining whether an overtime trigger condition occurs prior to said first closing time; and
adding a first overtime interval to said first closing time.

94. (Withdrawn) The machine-readable medium of claim 92, further comprising:

setting a third closing time for a third lot;
determining whether to extend said third closing time based on said extended second closing time; and
extending said third closing time in accordance with said determination.

95. (Withdrawn) A method of controlling closing times in an electronic auction between an originator and a plurality of bidders, comprising:

offering at least two lots to the plurality of potential bidders;
setting a first closing time for a first lot and second closing time for a second lot, wherein said second closing time is later than said first closing time;
receiving bids from bidders for said first lot;
extending said first closing time by an incremental amount of time upon the occurrence of an lot-extending event; and
extending said second closing time if said extended first closing time precedes said second closing time by less than a predefined time interval;

wherein the originator and each bidder are coupled electronically over a communications network during the auction.

96. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 95, wherein said lot-extending event is receiving a bid that is better than the best of the previously received bids.

97. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 95, wherein said lot-extending event is receiving a bid that is within a predetermined amount of a preceding bid.

98. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 95, wherein said lot-extending event is receiving a bid within a predefined interval of said first closing time.

99. (Withdrawn) A method of displaying updated lot closing times in an electronic auction, wherein said auction consists of at least two lots, comprising:

displaying information about a first lot and a second lot, said information including a first closing time for the first lot, and a second closing time for the second lot, wherein said second closing time is later than said first closing time;

submitting a bid for said first lot within a first predefined time interval of said first closing time; and

displaying an updated first closing time, wherein the updated first closing time is determined by extending the first closing time by first time extension increment; and

if said updated first closing time is less than a second predefined time interval of said second closing time, displaying an updated second closing time, wherein the updated second closing time is determined by extending the second closing time by a second time extension increment.

100. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 99, wherein the bid submitted is better than the best of any bid previously submitted.

101. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 99, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined amount of a previously submitted bid.

102. The method of claim 99, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined rank of a previously submitted bid.

103. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 99, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined percentage of a previously submitted bid.

104. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to display updated lot closing times in an electronic auction, wherein said auction consists of at least two lots, wherein said auction consists of at least two lots, comprising:

displaying information about a first lot and a second lot, said information including a first closing time for the first lot, and a second closing time for the second lot, wherein said second closing time is later than said first closing time;

submitting a bid for said first lot within a first predefined time interval of said first closing time; and

displaying an updated first closing time, wherein the updated first closing time is determined by extending the first closing time by first time extension increment; and

if said updated first closing time is less than a second predefined time interval of said second closing time, displaying an updated second closing time, wherein the updated second closing time is determined by extending the second closing time by a second time extension increment.

105. (Withdrawn) The computer-readable medium of claim 104, wherein the bid submitted is better than the best of any bid previously submitted.

106. (Withdrawn) The computer-readable medium of claim 104, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined amount of a previously submitted bid.

107. (Withdrawn) The computer-readable medium of claim 104, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined rank of a previously bid.

108. (Withdrawn) The computer-readable medium of claim 104, wherein the bid submitted is within a predetermined percentage of a previously submitted bid.

109. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method ~~of maintaining a minimum time interval between lot closing times in a multi-lot electronic auction between an originator and a plurality of bidders~~, comprising:

presenting, over a communications network, a first lot and a second lot to [the] a plurality of bidders in a multi-lot electronic auction between an originator and the plurality of bidders, wherein a closing time of the first lot precedes a closing time of the second lot;

receiving, over the communications network, bids ~~from~~ of the plurality of bidders for the first lot;

extending [[the]] a closing time of the first lot by an incremental amount of time upon [[the]] an occurrence of an overtime trigger; and

if the difference in time between the extended closing time of the first lot precedes [[the]] a closing time of the second lot by less than a minimum time interval, extending the closing time of the second lot by [[an]] the incremental amount of time, the minimum time interval and the incremental amount of time being stored in memory.

110. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 109, wherein the overtime trigger is selected from the group consisting of a receipt of a bid with a ranking criterion, receipt of a bid with a quality criterion and receipt of bids having a bid group characteristic.

111. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 110, wherein said ranking criterion is selected from the group consisting of a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

112. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 110, wherein said quality criterion is selected from the group consisting of an absolute bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid, and a bid from an incumbent bidder.

113. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 110, wherein said bid group characteristic is selected from the group consisting of an increase in frequency of bids, a statistical analysis of bid prices from a group of bidders and a statistical analysis of bid prices received from one bidder.

114. (Original) The method of claim 109, wherein said minimum time interval is at least five minutes.

115. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions which, when executed by a processing system, cause the processing system to perform a method for maintaining a minimum interval between lot closing times in a multi-lot electronic auction between an originator and a plurality of bidders, wherein the originator and each bidder are coupled electronically over a communications network, the method comprising:

presenting, over a communications network, a first lot and a second lot to ~~[[the]]~~ a plurality of bidders in a multi-lot electronic auction between an originator and the plurality of bidders, wherein a closing time of the first lot precedes a closing time of the second lot;

receiving, over the communications network, bids ~~from~~ of the plurality of bidders for the first lot;

extending ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of the first lot by an incremental amount of time upon ~~[[the]]~~ an occurrence of an overtime trigger; and

if the difference in time between the extended closing time of the first lot precedes ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of the second lot by less than a minimum time interval, extending the closing time of the second lot by ~~[[an]]~~ the incremental amount of time, the minimum time interval and the incremental amount of time being stored in memory.

116. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 115, wherein the overtime trigger is selected from the group consisting of a receipt of a bid with a ranking criterion, receipt of a bid with a quality criterion and receipt of bids having a bid group characteristic.

117. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 116, wherein said ranking criterion is selected from the group consisting of a best bid and a predetermined rank from said best bid.

118. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 116, wherein said quality criterion is selected from the group consisting of an absolute bid price, a bid price within a predetermined absolute difference from a best bid price, a bid price within a predetermined percentage difference from said best bid, and a bid from an incumbent bidder.

119. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 116, wherein said bid group characteristic is selected from the group consisting of an increase in frequency of bids, a statistical analysis of bid prices from a group of bidders and a statistical analysis of bid prices received from one bidder.

120. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said minimum time interval is at least five minutes.

121. (Withdrawn) A bidding device operated by a bidder during a multi-lot auction, said bidding device comprising software that enables the bidder to submit bids to an online action;

wherein said bidding device displays information about a first and second lot, said information including a first closing time for the first lot, and a second closing time for the second lot, and said second closing time is later than said first closing time;

wherein if said bidder submits a bid for the first lot within a predefined time interval before said first closing time, said bidding device displays an updated first closing time that is determined by extending the first closing time by a first time extension increment; and

wherein if said extended first closing time is less than a second predefined time interval of said second closing time, said bidding device displays an updated second closing time that is determined by extending the second closing time by a second time extension increment.

122. (Withdrawn) The bidding device of claim 121, wherein said submitted bid is better than the best of any bid previously submitted.

123. (Withdrawn) The bidding device of claim 121, wherein said submitted bid is within a predetermined amount of a previously submitted bid.

124. (Withdrawn) The bidding device of claim 121, wherein said submitted bid is within a predetermined rank of a previously submitted bid.

125. (Withdrawn) The bidding device of claim 121, wherein said submitted bid is within a predetermined percentage of a previously submitted bid.

126. (Currently Amended) A computerized-implemented method ~~of maintaining a predefined minimum time interval between the closing time of lots in an electronic auction, wherein the closing time of a current lot is preceded by the closing time of a preceding lot, and the closing time of the current lot precedes the closing time of a subsequent lot,~~ comprising:

- (a) determining if ~~[[the]]~~ a difference of ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of ~~[[the]]~~ a current lot in an electronic auction and ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of ~~[[the]]~~ a preceding lot in an electronic auction is less than a first predefined time interval stored in memory, wherein the closing time of the current lot is preceded by the closing time of the preceding lot, and the closing time of the current lot precedes a closing time of a subsequent lot;
- (b) if the difference is less than the first predefined time interval, setting the closing time of the current lot to the closing time of the preceding lot plus ~~[[the]]~~ a predefined minimum time interval stored in memory; and
- (c) if the difference of the extended closing time of the current lot and the closing time of the subsequent lot is less than a second predefined time interval stored in memory, setting the closing time of the subsequent lot to the closing time of the current lot plus the predefined minimum time interval.

127. (Currently Amended) A computerized-implemented method ~~of maintaining a predefined minimum time interval between the closing time of lots in an electronic auction, wherein the closing~~

~~time of a current lot is preceded by the closing time of a preceding lot, and the closing time of the current lot precedes the closing time of a subsequent lot, comprising:~~

- (a) determining if ~~[[the]]~~ a difference of ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of ~~[[the]]~~ a current lot in an electronic auction and ~~[[the]]~~ a closing time of ~~[[the]]~~ a preceding lot in the electronic auction is less than a first predefined time interval stored in memory, wherein the closing time of the current lot is preceded by the closing time of the preceding lot, and the closing time of the current lot precedes the closing time of a subsequent lot; and
- (b) if the difference is less than the first predefined time interval, setting the closing time of the current lot to the closing time of the preceding lot plus ~~[[the]]~~ a predefined minimum time interval stored in memory; and for each subsequent lot:
 - (i) setting the subsequent lot to be the current lot; and repeating ~~steps (a)–(b)~~ (a) and (b) until there are no more subsequent lots.